## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Docket No.: O0277.70001US00

## 1-31 (Canceled)

32. (Currently Amended) A method of inducing an antigen specific immune response in a subject comprising

administering to the subject an expression plasmid vector capable of expressing a hepatitis B virus <u>surface or core</u> antigen, <u>or a fragment thereof</u>, and including a promoter for the expression of the hepatitis B virus antigen in the subject in an effective amount to induce an antigen specific immune response against <u>the</u> hepatitis B virus antigen.

- 33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein administration of said vector is conducted at least five days after administration of at least one substance capable of inducing a coagulating necrosis of muscle fibers and wherein said administration of said vector and said substance is about in the same area.
  - 34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, wherein said substance is bupivacaine.
- 35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein the vector is administered at least 7 days after the administration of bupivacaine.
- 36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the administration is carried out by intramuscular injection.
- 37. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 36, wherein the intramuscular injection is carried out using a liquid jet gun.
- 38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the promoter is endogenous to hepatitis B virus.

- 39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the antigen is a protein or antigenic portion thereof selected from the group consisting of major/small envelope protein (S), middle envelope protein ( $S_2$ -S), and large envelope protein ( $S_1$ -S<sub>2</sub>-S).
  - 40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, wherein the gene encodes the S protein.

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- 41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the promoter is a viral promoter.
- 42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the promoter is a cytomegalovirus promoter.
- 43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the promoter is a mammalian promoter.
- 44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the vector is pCMV-HB-S1.S.S deposited with the CNCM under No. I-1411.
- 45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the vector is pCMV-HB-S2.S deposited with the CNCM under No. I-1410.
- 46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the vector is pRSV-HBS deposited with the CNCM under No. I-1371.
- 47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the vector is pHBV-S1.S2.S deposited with the CNCM under No. I-1409.

- 48. (Withdrawn) A plasmid vector comprising a promoter selected from the group consisting of rous sarcoma virus (RSV) and cytomegalovirus (CMV) and a gene encoding a hepatitis B virus antigen.
- 49. (Withdrawn) The vector of claim 48, wherein the hepatitis B virus antigen is a protein or antigenic portion thereof selected from the group consisting of major/small envelope protein (S), middle envelope protein ( $S_2$ -S), and large envelope protein ( $S_1$ -S<sub>2</sub>-S).
- 50. (Withdrawn) The vector of claim 48, wherein the vector is pCMV-HB-S1.S.S deposited with the CNCM under No. I-1411.
- 51. (Withdrawn) The vector of claim 48, wherein the vector is pCMV-HB-S2.S deposited with the CNCM under No. I-1410.
- 52. (Withdrawn) The vector of claim 48, wherein the vector is pRSV-HBS deposited with the CNCM under No. I-1371.
- 53. (Withdrawn) The vector of claim 48, wherein the vector is pHBV-S1.S2.S deposited with the CNCM under No. I-1409.